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TAUNTON RURAL DISTRICT

Annual Report

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

AND

**Senior Public Health
Inspector**

FOR THE YEAR 1958

TAUNTON:

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TAUNTON RURAL DISTRICT

PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF, 1958

*Medical Officer of Health and Medical Superintendent of the
Taunton Isolation Hospital and Taunton
Tuberculosis Sanatorium, Taunton :*

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(appt. August, 1946).

Senior Public Health Inspector :
W. PLIMMER, M.A.P.H.I. (appt. July, 1950).

Additional Public Health Inspector :
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To :

THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE
TAUNTON RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present my Annual Report for 1958. The report contains the usual information on the health and sanitary circumstances of the district. This has again been divided into two sections, the first referring to the province of the Medical Officer of Health, and the second contributed by the Senior Public Health Inspector. The report, in the main, follows the same lines as that of the previous year, but certain fresh facts have been incorporated in the various sections.

Some features of the year under review are as follows :—

- (1) Progress in the housing field is referred to in the section dealing with this subject. It will be seen that the total number of houses built by the Council amounted, at the end of 1958, to 1,103, and that the estimated waiting list for houses had been reduced from 478 to 365. An interesting point is that of this waiting list, about two thirds consisted of families living in five parishes clustered round the Borough of Taunton. The trend seems to be towards the need for smaller houses than the three-bedroom type which has formed the bulk of those constructed in the past. A recent survey disclosed that at least 130 three-bedroom houses were each occupied by two persons, and that in 20 cases there was one single person living in a two or three bedroomed house. The Council, during the year, approved plans for the building of 66 bungalows, mostly of one-bedroom type, and this should help matters by allowing transfers of tenants to these bungalows from under-occupied houses. It is probably needless to add that transfers of this sort are always carried out on a voluntary basis. The bungalow type of dwelling is also most suitable for single old people and elderly couples, and there were still 49 applications on the waiting list coming into this category. There is no doubt that, having regard to present population trends, the building of smaller council houses will prove a wise policy. Another fact worthy of note is that by the end of 1958 all tenants had been re-housed from the ex-military camps which were unofficially occupied after the last war, and thus that rather unsatisfactory chapter in the history of the district's housing has been closed. I am

indebted for some of these facts and figures to the Council's Housing Officer. Public Health and Housing are closely bound up with each other, and I should like to put on record my appreciation of the helpfulness and efficiency of Mr. Groves in all matters where the medical aspect impinges on the work of his Department.

- (2) One of the most promising Public Health measures of recent years is immunisation against Poliomyelitis. This was pressed forward with vigorously during the year under review. The fact that there was no cases of the disease during 1958 can hardly be attributed to immunisation, since some time is required for immunity to build up in the individual, but the injections being given now can be confidently expected to show excellent results in the shape of prevention and control in the near future.
- (3) A problem which has been referred to previously concerns the elderly in the community. The shift in age distribution of the general population means that many more men and women are living on into the seventies and eighties and thus the characteristic disabilities of these age groups come into increasing prominence. The appointment towards the end of the year of a part-time Consultant Geriatrician for this among other districts will certainly be of great benefit in the care and treatment of these old people.

Once again I wish to thank the Members of the Council, the Clerk and Officials of other Departments, the Staff of the Public Health Department, and the Matron and Staff of the Isolation Hospital for their willing assistance and co-operation.

I am,

Your obedient Servant,

HUGH MORRISON.

TAUNTON RURAL DISTRICT

Statistics of the Area for the Year 1958

| | | | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----------|
| Area (in acres) | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 70,529 |
| Estimate of resident population, mid-year 1958 | ... | | | | | 20,670 |
| Census population, 1951 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 20,516 |
| No. of inhabited houses according to the Rate Books on 31st December, 1958 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 6,359 |
| Rateable value 31st December, 1958 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | £191,959 |
| Sum represented by a 1d. Rate, year 1958-59 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | £765 |

Physical Features and Social Conditions

Taunton Rural District lies in the south-western region of Somerset, surrounding Taunton Borough, the County Town. It is roughly triangular in shape, with Taunton Borough situated near the middle of the triangle. The boundary of the district is formed on the north by the Rural Districts of Williton and Bridgwater; on the east and south-east by the Rural Districts of Langport and Chard; on the south by the County of Devon; on the south-west and west by the Rural District of Wellington.

There is considerable variation in the type of country found in different parts of the district: in the north and north-west there is high ground forming portions of the Quantock and Brendon Hills; in the south the land rises to the hill parish of Churchstanton lying in the Blackdowns; between these regions lies the fertile valley of Taunton Deane, with the ground falling towards the east to the flat moors and marshy ground surrounding the lower reaches of Tone and Parret. Geologically also, the formations vary. In the north are found chiefly old and new red sandstone; in the south, lower lias and upper greensand; the valley regions have new red marl, new red sandstone and alluvium.

The climate is equable, with an average annual rainfall of 36.6 ins., and an average mean daily temperature of about 41° F. in January and 62° F. in July.

Rich arable and pasture land covers most of the district, but some of the hill regions are in the rough uncultivated state, and the soil on the Blackdown Hills tends to be poor in quality. In the eastern parishes the land is subject to seasonal flooding. Communications are good, and almost all parts of the district are easily accessible by road. Following the Tone valley through the middle of the district runs one of the main lines of the Western Region of British Railways and three branch lines leave it at or near Taunton to run to the north, south and west.

There are thirty-two parishes with estimated populations varying from 69 to 3,147. Habitations are widely scattered over these parishes, but there are several sizeable villages, the largest being Bishops Lydeard, Bishops Hull, Lydeard St. Lawrence, North Curry and Trull.

Most of the inhabitants are engaged in some form of agriculture, dairy farming being particularly important. General farming is also largely practised, and allied activities are withy growing and basket-making, fruit farming and cider-making. There is a paper mill in the district which employs a fair number of people, and another source of employment for men is stone-quarrying which is carried out on a considerable scale. Many of the residents in the rural district travel daily to Taunton to work in factories and other establishments.

There is one large institution in the district, namely Tone Vale Hospital in the parish of Norton Fitzwarren, which, with its patients and resident staff, accounts for a population of about 1,200.

VITAL STATISTICS OF THE YEAR

With reference to the figures which follow, it should be pointed out that the standardisation of the rate for births and deaths allows for the differing age and sex distribution of the populations in different areas, and is obtained by multiplying the crude rate by a comparability factor for the district furnished by the Registrar General. This enables comparison to be made with the figures for the country as a whole, or with those for other districts.

1. Births.

(a) Live Births.

| | M. | F. | Total | } Crude birth rate per 1,000 of the estimated resi- dent population 14.33 |
|--------------|-----|-----|-------|--|
| Legitimate | 143 | 147 | 290 | |
| Illegitimate | 16 | 2 | 18 | |
| Totals | 159 | 149 | 308 | |

| | | |
|---|-----|-------|
| { Standardised Birth Rate, Taunton R.D. ... | ... | 16.62 |
| { Birth Rate, England and Wales ... | ... | 16.4 |

(b) Still Births.

| | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| Total... | ... | ... | ... | 6 |
| { Rate per 1,000 (live and still) births— | | | | |
| { Taunton R.D. ... | ... | ... | ... | 19.11 |
| { England and Wales ... | ... | ... | ... | 21.6 |
| { Rate per 1,000 estimated resident population— | | | | |
| { Taunton R.D. ... | ... | ... | ... | 0.28 |

2. Deaths.

| | | | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-------|
| (a) Total Deaths | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 304 |
| Crude Rate per 1,000 estimated resident population | | | | | | 14.15 |
| { Standardised Death Rate, Taunton R.D. | ... | ... | ... | ... | 9.91 | |
| { Death Rate for England and Wales | ... | ... | ... | ... | 11.7 | |

(b) Maternal Mortality.

| | |
|---|---|
| Total maternal deaths from all causes ... | 1 |
|---|---|

(c) Infant Mortality.

Deaths of infants under 1 year of age—

| | | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| Total | ... | ... | ... | ... | 7 |
| Deaths among legitimate infants | ... | ... | ... | ... | 7 |
| „ illegitimate „ | ... | ... | ... | ... | 0 |
| { Death Rate per 1,000 total (live and still) births— | | | | | |
| Taunton R.D. | ... | ... | ... | ... | 22.29 |
| England and Wales | ... | ... | ... | ... | 22.5 |

(d) Deaths from Cancer (all ages)—

Total 43.

Infant Mortality during 1958

| Cause of Death | | | | | Under 1 week | 1 to 2 weeks | 1 to 6 months | 6 to 12 months | Total under 1 year |
|--------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Congenital Heart Disease | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | — | — | — | 1 |
| Collapse of Lung | ... | ... | ... | ... | 3 | — | — | — | 3 |
| Adrenal Failure | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | — | — | — | 1 |
| Prematurity | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 | — | — | — | 2 |
| Total | ... | ... | ... | ... | 7 | — | — | — | 7 |

Causes of Death during 1958

| | | | | | M. | F. | Total. |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------|
| Tuberculosis, respiratory | ... | ... | ... | ... | — | — | — |
| Tuberculosis, other | ... | ... | ... | ... | — | — | — |
| Syphilitic disease | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | — | 1 |
| Diphtheria | ... | ... | ... | ... | — | — | — |
| Whooping cough | ... | ... | ... | ... | — | — | — |
| Meningococcal infections | ... | ... | ... | ... | — | — | — |
| Acute poliomyelitis | ... | ... | ... | ... | — | — | — |
| Measles | ... | ... | ... | ... | — | — | — |
| Other infective and parasitic diseases | ... | ... | ... | ... | — | 2 | 2 |
| Malignant neoplasm, stomach | ... | ... | ... | ... | 4 | 2 | 6 |
| Malignant neoplasm, lung, bronchus | ... | ... | ... | ... | 5 | — | 5 |
| Malignant neoplasm, breast | ... | ... | ... | ... | — | 7 | 7 |
| Malignant neoplasm, uterus | ... | ... | ... | ... | — | 1 | 1 |
| Other malignant and lymphatic neoplasms | ... | ... | ... | ... | 10 | 10 | 20 |
| Leukæmia, aleukæmia | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | — | 1 |
| Diabetes | ... | ... | ... | ... | — | — | — |
| Vascular lesions of nervous system | ... | ... | ... | ... | 18 | 31 | 49 |
| Coronary disease, angina | ... | ... | ... | ... | 23 | 28 | 51 |
| Hypertension with heart disease | ... | ... | ... | ... | 3 | 5 | 8 |
| Other heart disease | ... | ... | ... | ... | 12 | 29 | 41 |
| Other circulatory disease | ... | ... | ... | ... | 8 | 8 | 16 |
| Influenza | ... | ... | ... | ... | — | 1 | 1 |
| Pneumonia | ... | ... | ... | ... | 6 | 10 | 16 |
| Bronchitis | ... | ... | ... | ... | 6 | 5 | 11 |
| Other disease of respiratory system | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | — | 1 |
| Ulcer of stomach and duodenum | ... | ... | ... | ... | — | — | — |
| Gastritis, enteritis and diarrhœa | ... | ... | ... | ... | — | — | — |
| Nephritis and nephrosis | ... | ... | ... | ... | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| Hyperplasia of prostate | ... | ... | ... | ... | 3 | — | 3 |
| Pregnancy, childbirth, abortion | ... | ... | ... | ... | — | 1 | 1 |
| Congenital malformations | ... | ... | ... | ... | — | 2 | 2 |
| Other defined and ill-defined diseases | ... | ... | ... | ... | 16 | 31 | 47 |
| Motor vehicle accidents | ... | ... | ... | ... | 4 | — | 4 |
| All other accidents | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | 4 | 5 |
| Suicide | ... | ... | ... | ... | — | — | — |
| Homicide and operations of war | ... | ... | ... | ... | — | — | — |
| All Causes—Total | | | | | 125 | 179 | 304 |

GENERAL PROVISION of HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA

Domiciliary Services

(1) Medical and Nursing

There are six general medical practitioners living and carrying on the main part of their practice in different areas of the district. In addition to this, most of the Taunton Borough practitioners have some rural district residents on their lists, and there is also, as would be expected, some overlap from the surrounding rural districts in the provision of medical attention. There are adequate arrangements for domiciliary consultation, when required, with consultants serving the Taunton area, and speaking generally, the practice of medicine in the district is of a high standard. The provisions for domiciliary nursing are also satisfactory.

(2) Home Help Service

This service, administered by the Somerset County Council, is now well established in the district, and invaluable assistance is given in many cases of illness and the domestic difficulties arising therefrom. There is no doubt that this is one of the most useful of all public services. I am indebted to the County Organiser for the following analysis of cases where help was arranged in Taunton Rural District during 1958.

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|
| Maternity | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 26 |
| Old age | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 44 |
| Chronic illness | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 12 |
| Tuberculosis | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 |
| Emergency illness | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 16 |
| Total | | | | | | 99 |

Hospital Services

The Hospital Services of the district are administered by the Taunton Hospital Management Committee, under the general direction of the S.W. Regional Hospital Board. Some of the provisions for the needs of various types of patient are detailed below :—

(1) General Medical and Surgical

The Taunton and Somerset Hospital together with Musgrove Park Hospital which is also situated in the Borough of Taunton, and which is probably eventually destined to supersede the first-named establishment, cater for most medical and surgical conditions. Musgrove Park Hospital takes most of the adult cases, and also has a comprehensive Pædiatric Department. The Taunton and Somerset Hospital is in the meantime dealing with Orthopædics and Ophthalmology. It also houses the Casualty Department for the area. Both hospitals have out-patient facilities in addition to in-patient beds. Certain cases requiring special investigation or treatment such as neurosurgery or radiotherapy are referred to Bristol Hospitals for this purpose.

(2) Infectious Diseases

Cases of infectious disease from Taunton Rural District are sent to the Taunton Isolation Hospital, situated in the Borough of Taunton. The bulk of the Isolation Hospital work is done in individual rooms and cubicles. The hospital has been admitting in the past year or two many cases, especially among children, of various pyrexial and nutritional illnesses not coming into the strict category of notifiable diseases, which would formerly have been treated in General Hospitals. Home isolation is carried out wherever the home conditions are satisfactory. Most cases of Ophthalmia Neonatorum are admitted to the Isolation Hospital and also cases of Puerperal Pyrexia. Cases of Poliomyelitis and patients suspected to be suffering from this condition have become one of the chief problems, especially in the summer months.

(3) Tuberculosis

Cases of pulmonary and non-pulmonary Tuberculosis come under the Regional Hospital Board for treatment, which is supervised by the Chest Physicians for the area. The Sanatoria are at Quantock, Wincanton and Taunton for pulmonary cases. Cases requiring orthopædic treatment are admitted to Bath Orthopædic Hospital. Compton Bishop Children's Home, near Axbridge has been closed largely because of the decrease in the number of children requiring treatment for tuberculosis or pre-tubercular conditions.

(4) Poliomyelitis

Suspected cases are sent for diagnosis to the Taunton Isolation Hospital. If the condition is confirmed they are seen by Regional Specialists who arrange for continuation treatment either as out-patients or as in-patients at Bath Orthopædic Hospital.

(5) Chronic Sick

Patients are received into hospitals, chiefly those in Taunton and Wellington, which have now passed from Public Assistance administration to that of the Regional Hospital Board. The status and reputation of these institutions is improving, more or less rapidly, as their association with the less desirable features of the old Poor Law fades from public memory. A geriatric service for the Taunton area is in process of development.

Powers now exist under the National Assistance Act, 1948, Section 47, for the compulsory removal to a suitable institution of persons who are not able to devote to themselves and are not receiving from other people, proper care and attention. There are adequate safeguards against misuse of these powers, but cases do crop up from time to time when they are very useful and in the true interest of the person concerned. The onus is thrown upon the Medical Officer of Health to investigate these cases and to advise on whether these powers ought to be invoked. Once again the procedure was not required during the year, but a number of cases were kept under review.

(6) Mental Sick

Cases are admitted to the Mental Hospital at Tone Vale, near Taunton. The psychiatric specialists conduct out-patients' clinics for the area, and it is felt that now, more than ever before, mental patients are having the benefit of treatment at an earlier and more hopeful stage of the disease.

Mentally defective cases are well provided for at Sandhill Park Hospital which is situated in Taunton Rural District.

Clinics and Treatment Centres

(1) Tuberculosis

Clinics for patients suffering from this disease, and for the supervision of suspects and contacts, are held by the Chest Physicians at Musgrove Park Hospital. There is an After-Care Committee working in co-operation with these clinics. Mass radiography has been carried out from time to time on various groups of the County population, by a team working from a centre in Bristol, but this service has not been called upon to deal with residents in Taunton Rural District.

(2) Venereal Disease

A combined Clinic and Treatment Centre is carried on at the Taunton and Somerset Hospital which caters for male and female patients of this and surrounding districts. This centre has now come under the administration of the Regional Hospital Board. Early cases of syphilis are usually sent to Frenchay Hospital, Bristol, for a fortnight's intensive penicillin treatment as in-patients. Afterwards they continue observation and treatment at the Taunton Clinic.

(3) Maternity and Child Welfare

The Maternity and Child Welfare Acts are administered by the County Council, under whose supervision are also the Health Visitors and Midwives practising within the area. There is an excellent Maternity Home in the Urban District of Wellington at which some of the mothers from Taunton Rural District are confined. Obstetric Consultants in Taunton are available for consultation with Medical Practitioners in the District. Abnormal and complicated cases can be admitted for hospital treatment when necessary. Every case of Puerperal Pyrexia and Maternal Mortality is investigated by the Medical Staff of the County Council.

Laboratory Facilities

The Public Health Laboratory Service has a Laboratory in Taunton which undertakes the bacteriological examination of swabs, blood, faeces and sputum, etc. This service is available also to the Doctors practising in the District. Bacteriological and chemical analyses are also undertaken for the examination of milk, foods,

Ambulance Facilities

Ambulance transport for all cases has now become the responsibility of the Somerset County Council. A central ambulance department has been set up which arranges for vehicles to be provided as required. A twenty-four hour service is maintained throughout each day of the week.

PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Acute Infectious Diseases

The following table gives the number of notifications received for various notifiable diseases, their age groups, and the number admitted to Taunton Isolation Hospital:—

[illegible]

The following table shows notification rates of the above diseases for Taunton Rural District compared with the same rates in the previous year. In each instance these rates are calculated as numbers of notified cases per 1,000 of population, except with Puerperal Pyrexia in which the rate is furnished by the number of cases per 1,000 total live and still births:—

| Diseases. | No. of Notifications in Taunton Rural District. | Rates for Taunton R.D. | |
|--------------------------|--|------------------------|-------|
| | | 1958 | 1957 |
| Scarlet Fever | 12 | 0.50 | 0.26 |
| Dysentery | 1 | 0.05 | 0.17 |
| Measles | 296 | 13.77 | 14.19 |
| Whooping Cough | 8 | 0.37 | 5.76 |
| Pneumonia | 3 | 0.14 | 0.26 |
| Erysipelas | 10 | 0.46 | 0.22 |
| Puerperal Pyrexia | 2 | 6.37 | 8.31 |
| Food Poisoning | 4 | 0.19 | 0.0 |
| Ophthalmia Neonatorum | 2 | 0.09 | 0.0 |
| Encephalitis | 1 | 0.05 | 0.0 |

No special comment is called for on the prevalence of infectious diseases in the District as revealed in the foregoing tables.

Tuberculosis

The following table gives the number of new cases of respiratory and non-respiratory Tuberculosis notified during 1958 and mortality from the disease:—

New Cases ^{and} Mortality during 1958

| Ages in Years | New Cases | | | | Deaths | | | |
|---------------|-----------|----|-----------|----|-----------|----|-----------|----|
| | Resp'tory | | Non-Resp. | | Resp'tory | | Non-Resp. | |
| | M. | F. | M. | F. | M. | F. | M. | F. |
| 0 — 1 ... | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| 1 — 5 ... | — | — | — | 1 | — | — | — | — |
| 5 — 10 ... | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| 10 — 15 ... | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| 15 — 20 ... | — | 1 | — | 2 | — | — | — | — |
| 20 — 25 ... | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| 25 — 35 ... | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| 35 — 45 ... | 2 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| 45 — 55 ... | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| 55 — 65 ... | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| 65 and up... | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Not known ... | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Total ... | 3 | | 7 | | — | | — | |

At the end of the year, the Tuberculosis Register contained the names and addresses of 111 cases of pulmonary Tuberculosis and 20 cases of non-pulmonary Tuberculosis.

Diphtheria and Whooping Cough Prophylaxis

For the eighteenth year in succession no cases of Diphtheria have occurred in the district. This gratifying fact is largely due to the immunisation campaign which has now been conscientiously carried out for many years. There may be a tendency to forget the great benefits of this procedure, especially since poliomyelitis immunisation has become such a prominent issue; but the time has not yet arrived when protection against diphtheria can be dispensed with, and all of us have a duty to encourage mothers and those in charge of young children to have the necessary injections given.

It is customary in the county of Somerset to combine immunisation against whooping cough with the course used to protect against diphtheria, and this is also a most valuable public health measure, since whooping cough is now probably the most serious of the common infectious diseases affecting young children.

In previous reports the total number of children known to have completed a course of diphtheria immunisation at various ages was stated. These figures are no longer available from the County Council who are responsible for keeping records of diphtheria immunisation, but the following table indicates the number of children who completed a full course during the year 1958.

| Under 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5—9 | 10—14 | Total |
|---------|----|---|----|---|-----|-------|-------|
| 165 | 53 | 5 | 13 | 1 | 14 | — | 241 |

Poliomyelitis Prophylaxis

During the year 1958 immunisation against poliomyelitis was given to a large number of children, and this campaign continues steadily. This method of protection involves two small injections given at about a month's interval followed by a third boosting injection seven months afterwards. A total of 1,317 children from the Rural District had been, or were in process of being, immunised in this way by the end of the year. There was a prospect that the same protection would, at a later date, be offered to further age-groups of the population.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA

Water Supply

Of the 6,359 houses in the district, it is estimated that 4,500 are connected with a public piped water supply.

Public water undertakings owned by the Council are six in number, viz:—

| | | | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Eastern Parishes (formerly Portman) | | | | | | } Treated by chlorina- tion |
| 2. Churchstanton | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | |
| 3. Cothelstone | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | |
| 4. Thurlbear | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | |
| 5. West Bagborough | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | } Unchlor- inated |
| 6. Westleigh, Lydeard St. Lawrence | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | |

All these supplies are subjected to regular chemical analysis and bacteriological testing, and a tabular statement of these water analyses will be found in the report of the Senior Public Health Inspector. The only one to cause any anxiety is that of the West Bagborough water in which the bacteriological counts have been fluctuating in an unsatisfactory way. It may be necessary for the Council to consider chlorination here unless an improvement takes place. The supplies as a whole in the area are only just adequate for present needs.

In addition to the supplies owned by the Taunton Rural District Council there is an extensive portion of the district served by the Taunton Corporation Water Undertaking. The following parishes are supplied as a whole or in part from this source:—Bishops Hull, Cheddon Fitzpaine, Corfe, Creech St. Michael, Norton Fitzwarren, Orchard Portman, Pitminster, Ruishton, Staple-grove, Stoke St. Mary, Thornfalcon, Trull and West Monkton. This water is regularly tested and kept under supervision by the Taunton Borough authorities, and has maintained a consistently excellent standard.

The remainder of the district is supplied chiefly from wells, most of them coming into the shallow category, and thus being very liable to pollution. Cleaning of contaminated wells followed by chlorination sometimes results in a pure supply for a period of time, but the trouble is always likely to recur, and the wells can never be relied upon to provide a constant wholesome supply. Often boiling of water before use has to be advised, and the problem will not be

satisfactorily solved until piped water is taken to the properties concerned. Sometimes shortage occurs in the well supplies, particularly in West Hatch parish, but this was not generally a cause of concern during the year under review.

No plumbo-solvent action exists in any of the water supplies of the district.

The Taunton Borough Council's Scheme for constructing a reservoir at Clatworthy was making good progress.

Sewerage and Sewage Disposal

Of the 32 parishes in the District, only seven have sewage disposal works, and of these works, perhaps three may be regarded as meeting disposal requirements satisfactorily, namely those in the parishes of Bishops Lydeard, Bishops Hull and Norton Fitzwarren, while the remaining four at Combe Florey, Hatch Beauchamp, North Curry and Corfe are inadequate for their purpose.

The provision of public sewerage schemes in various areas of the district which are at present without this amenity was a much more definite prospect at the end of the year. A point that should be made at this stage is that when these schemes come into operation it is very desirable that most, if not all of the properties which can be served by the sewer should be connected to it. It has been found that when public sewerage has been provided in some other areas of the country, a fairly high percentage of property owners in these districts have elected not to take advantage of this facility. This is unfortunate because it reduces the economic value of these costly schemes, and also because the effect on public health is likely in the long run to be detrimental. Where pail closets are to be replaced, there will usually be little opposition, and the claim that existing private sewerage arrangements are satisfactory comes mainly from those who have septic tanks. It has to be admitted that in some cases these do fulfil the purpose for which they are intended without causing any trouble, but very often they do not, and some of the points connected with inefficient performance are as follows :—

- (1) They usually require some degree of skilled attention from time to time if they are to work satisfactorily over a prolonged period, and often this attention is not forthcoming.
- (2) Their efficiency depends to a good extent on the soil in which they are situated, light sandy or gravelly soil being best, and heavy clay soils tending to give rise to inefficiency and nuisance. Low-lying sites, with little fall for the fluids to drain away, are also disadvantageous.

- (3) Their efficiency may also depend on the weather, as when flooding or saturation of the soil or subsoil takes place and tends to impair their action.
- (4) Inefficiency may result from overloading, depending on the number of people in the property or properties served by the tank.
- (5) They may remain efficient for a certain time and then become inefficient; or their efficiency may vary from time to time throughout the year. It is a very difficult matter for the staff of a Public Health Department to keep a check on these variations.
- (6) They may be quite satisfactory from the owner's point of view while at the same time giving rise to nuisance at a distance from contamination of ditches, ponds or other areas of the district.
- (7) It is often very difficult to prove the precise source of any nuisance which they cause, and therefore difficult to pin the responsibility on to any particular tank or tanks with sufficient confidence to be able to take legal steps, if necessary, against the owner. Therefore the idea is largely fallacious that if any private system gives rise to a nuisance there will be an easy remedy of requiring the owner to connect to the sewer.

A properly planned public sewerage system is not subject to any of the disadvantages which have been enumerated, and therefore when one becomes available it is most desirable that as many properties as possible should be connected to it.

Housing

Provision of houses in the District by the Council has gone on steadily throughout the year. 85 were completed in 1958, and since the end of the war 695 have been built. In addition to this, about 494 houses have been built by private enterprise during the same period. This building activity has had some effect on the waiting list of families requiring accommodation, but continued efforts in this direction will be required for some time to come. There were about 365 applicants for Council houses on the waiting list at the end of 1958.

Progress was made with slum clearance work, but many of the projects in this field were held up because of the difficulty of providing new houses for the families at present occupying condemnable houses. Up to the end of 1958, the result of inspection of unfit houses by the Sub-Committee appointed for the purpose is shown in the following table :—

| Action | No. of Houses |
|--|---------------------------|
| 1. Acquired by Council for demolition (site to be used for erecting new houses) | 6 |
| 2. Demolition Order made ... | 19 |
| 3. Undertaking given not to use for human habitation | 45 |
| 4. Houses actually demolished ... | 15 |
| 5. Clearance Area Procedure carried out | 5 (in one terraced block) |
| 6. Closing Order | 3 |

A number of Improvement Grants under the Housing (Financial Provisions) Act, 1958, were made by the Council during recent years. Consideration by members of Council and officials of applications for grants of this type has to be extremely careful and detailed, since considerable disbursement of public money is involved, but in cases which fulfil the requirements, this is a most useful way of saving property which would otherwise fall below the housing standards now demanded. During the year under review grants were approved in respect of 20 houses, and 123 had been the subject of grants in previous years.

Many families in the district, some of them perhaps from choice, but more of them probably from necessity, make use of caravans as permanent dwellings. It cannot be felt that this is the most desirable way of life, more especially when children form part of the family. During 1958, 39 moveable dwelling licences were issued, most of them for individual caravans, but some for sites capable of accommodating several. It was estimated that 200 caravans were in use with a total population of about 406.

The Council's building programme was as follows :—

| Parish. | Number completed during 1958 | Number under construction at 31st Dec., 1958 |
|------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| Bishops Lydeard | 79 | — |
| Bishops Hull | 6 | — |
| West Monkton | — | 14 |
| | | <hr/> 14 <hr/> |

The following table shows the Parishes in which the Council have erected houses under the various Acts :—

| Parish | Address | Number of Houses |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|------------------|
| Bishops Hull | 1/74 Smithy Cottages ... | 74 |
| do. | 20/35 Mountway Cottages ... | 16 |
| do. | 1/34 Northfield Estate ... | 34 |
| do. | 1/7 Shutemead ... | 7 |
| | 12/14 Shutemead ... | 3 |
| | | — 134 |
| Bishops Lydeard | 1/8 Gore Cottages ... | 8 |
| do. | 1/10 Pound Lane ... | 10 |
| do. | 1/12 Mill Lane Cottages ... | 12 |
| do. | 1/30 Halfyard Cottages ... | 30 |
| do. | 1/52 Darby Way ... | 52 |
| do. | 1/55 Greenway ... | 55 |
| do. | 64/115 Greenway ... | 52 |
| do. | 132/139 Greenway ... | 8 |
| | | — 227 |
| Cheddon Fitzpaine | 1/8 School Cottages ... | 8 |
| do. | 1/10 Cheddon Lawns ... | 10 |
| | | — 18 |
| Churchstanton | 1/4 Stapley Cottages ... | 4 |
| do. | 1/4 Church Road Cottages ... | 4 |
| | 1/16 Gillards Mead ... | 16 |
| | | — 24 |

| Parish | Address | Number of Houses |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|
| Combe Florey ... | 1/4 Meadowside ... | 4 |
| Corfe ... | 1/4 Brook Cottages ... | 4 |
| do. ... | 1/4 Adcombe View ... | 4 |
| | | — 8 |
| Creech St. Michael ... | 1/8 Ryes Terrace ... | 8 |
| do. ... | 1/12 Charlton Lane Cottages ... | 12 |
| do. ... | 1/4 Cheads Cottages ... | 4 |
| do. ... | 1/16 Rocketts Cottages ... | 16 |
| do. ... | 1/10 Creechwood Terrace ... | 10 |
| | | — 50 |
| Curland ... | 1/4 Castle View ... | 4 |
| Hatch Beauchamp ... | 1/4 Palmers Green Cottages ... | 4 |
| do. ... | 1/8 Crimthorne Cotts ... | 8 |
| do. ... | 2/12 Neroche View ... | 11 |
| | | — 23 |
| Kingston St. Mary ... | 1/6 Parks Cottages ... | 6 |
| do. ... | 1 and 2 Chases ... | 2 |
| do. ... | 1/8 Greenway Terrace ... | 8 |
| do. ... | 1/4 Fulford Cottages ... | 4 |
| do. ... | 1/10 Parsonage Cottages ... | 10 |
| do. ... | 1/8 Quantock Way ... | 8 |
| | | — 38 |
| Lydeard St. Lawrence ... | 1/8 Cross Croft ... | 8 |
| do. ... | 1/20 Nethercott Way ... | 20 |
| | | — 28 |
| North Curry ... | 1/6 Oxen Lane ... | 6 |
| do. ... | 1/4 Backham Cottages ... | 4 |
| do. ... | 1/10 Croft Cottages ... | 10 |
| do. ... | 1/8 Lillesdon Terrace ... | 8 |
| do. ... | 1/8 Cricket Cottages ... | 8 |
| do. ... | 1/27 Town Close ... | 27 |
| | | — 63 |
| Norton Fitzwarren ... | 1/4 Burnshill Terrace ... | 4 |
| do. ... | 1/10 Station Road Cottages ... | 10 |
| do. ... | 1/4 Manleys Cottages ... | 4 |
| do. ... | 1/4 Court Cottages ... | 4 |
| do. ... | 1/110 Hilly Park ... | 110 |
| do. ... | 6/52 Rectory Road ... | 24 |
| do. ... | 19/37 Rectory Road ... | 10 |
| | | — 166 |
| Otterford ... | 1/4 Brook Cottages ... | 4 |

| Parish | | Address | | Number of Houses |
|-------------------|-----|------------------------------|-----|------------------|
| Pitminster | ... | 1/8 Littleham Cottages | ... | 8 |
| do. | ... | 1/8 Colleylake Cottages | ... | 8 |
| | | 1/24 Wyatts Field | ... | 24 |
| | | | | — 40 |
| Ruishton | ... | 1/5 Ruishton Lane Cottages | ... | 5 |
| do. | ... | 1/3 Lipe Lane Cottages | ... | 3 |
| do. | ... | 1/4 Slades Cottages | ... | 4 |
| do. | ... | 1/12 Steart Cottages | ... | 12 |
| do. | ... | 1/28 Coronation Close | ... | 28 |
| | | | | — 52 |
| Staplegrove | ... | 1/6 Hillhead Cottages | ... | 6 |
| Stoke St. Gregory | ... | 1/16 Willey Road | ... | 16 |
| do. | ... | 1/8 Stathe Cottages | ... | 8 |
| do. | ... | 1/20 Woodhill Terrace | ... | 20 |
| do. | ... | 1 and 2 Meare Green Cottages | ... | 2 |
| do. | ... | 1/6 Polkes Field | ... | 6 |
| | | | | — 52 |
| Stoke St. Mary | ... | 1/4 Homefield Cottages | ... | 4 |
| do. | ... | 1/8 Pattens Cottages | ... | 8 |
| | | | | — 12 |
| Thornfalcon | ... | 1/8 Glebe Cottages | ... | 8 |
| Trull | ... | 1 and 2 Horts Cottages | ... | 2 |
| do. | ... | 7/14 Mill Lane | ... | 8 |
| do. | ... | 1/4 The Green | ... | 4 |
| | | | | — 14 |
| West Bagborough | ... | 1/10 Vale View Cottages | ... | 10 |
| do. | ... | 1/4 Hill View Cottages | ... | 4 |
| do. | ... | 1/4 South View Cottages | ... | 4 |
| do. | ... | 1/4 Parkside | ... | 4 |
| do. | ... | 3/14 Heathfield | ... | 12 |
| | | | | — 34 |
| West Hatch | ... | 1/4 Meare Elm | ... | 4 |
| West Monkton | ... | 1/4 Titley Cottages | ... | 4 |
| do. | ... | 1/4 Brittons Ash Cottages | ... | 4 |
| do. | ... | 1/6 Hyde Lane Cottages | ... | 6 |
| do. | ... | 1/14 School Road Cottages | ... | 14 |
| do. | ... | 1/54 Elms Estate | ... | 54 |
| do. | ... | 1/8 Bungalow Elms Estate | ... | 8 |
| | | | | — 90 |
| TOTAL | | | ... | 1,103 |

Of the above total of 1,103 houses, 244 were built to replace houses dealt with by Slum Clearance in previous years, under the Housing Acts of 1930 and 1936.

REPORT OF THE SENIOR PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR

The following is a tabular statement of work carried out during the year 1958 :—

Number and nature of inspections :—

| | | | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| Dwelling houses | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 286 |
| Food premises | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 9 |
| Slaughterhouses | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2,432 |
| Factories and Workshops | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 43 |
| Water supplies | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 59 |
| Drainage, foul ditches, etc. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 132 |
| Moveable Dwellings | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 90 |
| Infectious diseases | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 13 |
| Refuse and salvage collection and disposal | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 182 |
| Miscellaneous | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 144 |

Food Hygiene Regulations, 1955

Work has continued during the year on the inspection and supervision of food premises in the area. It was not found necessary to take legal proceedings in any cases for breach of the regulations.

Water Samples

49 samples of water have been obtained for bacteriological examination during the year. Of this number 30 have been taken from private supplies, and reported on as follows :—

| | |
|----------|------------|
| Grade 1. | 6 samples. |
| 2. | 4 „ |
| 3. | 5 „ |
| 4. | 15 „ |
| | <hr/> |
| | 30 |
| | <hr/> |

Advice on improving existing supplies and warnings against drinking water without boiling have been issued in all appropriate cases.

19 samples of water have been obtained from public supplies in the area. The results are as follows :—

| Supply. | No. of Samples. | Satisfactory. | Unsatis- factory. |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|---------------|----------------------|
| West Bagborough | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Cothelstone (chlorinated) ... | 3 | 3 | 0 |
| Lydeard St. Lawrence | 3 | 3 | 0 |
| Portman Supply (chlorinated) ... | 4 | 3 | 1 |
| Churchstanton (chlorinated) ... | 3 | 3 | 0 |
| Thurlbear (chlorinated) | 3 | 3 | 0 |

Investigations have been made in conjunction with the Surveyor to the Council in cases where reports fall short of the required standard.

Five chemical analyses have been taken and all were satisfactory.

Rodent Control

An operator is employed jointly with Wellington R.D.C. During the year the sewers, sewage disposal works and refuse tips were inspected and treated systematically. Private dwelling houses and business premises have been surveyed and treated both from complaints made and infestations discovered during surveys. Summary of inspection and control measures taken are as follows—

Report for 12 months ending 31st December, 1958

| | Non-Agricultural | | | | (5) Agricul- tural |
|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| | (1) Local Autho- rity | (2) Dwell- ing Houses | (3) All others (includ- ing Business Premises) | (4) Totals 1, 2 & 3 | |
| I. Number of Properties in Local Authority's District | 17 | 6,314 | 392 | 6,723 | 556 |
| II. Number of Properties in- spected as a result of | | | | | |
| (a) Notification ... | 3 | 107 | 4 | 114 | 6 |
| (b) Surveys ... | 14 | 437 | 92 | 543 | 129 |
| (c) Otherwise ... | — | 87 | 63 | 157 | 34 |
| III. Total Inspections carried out — including re-inspec- tions ... | 126 | 864 | 104 | 1,094 | 169 |
| IV. Number of Properties in- spected which were found to be infested by | | | | | |
| (a) Rats { Major | 1 | 3 | 2 | 6 | 3 |
| Minor | 16 | 192 | 28 | 236 | 66 |
| (b) Mice { Major | — | — | — | — | — |
| Minor | — | 18 | 1 | 19 | — |
| V. Number of Infested Prop- erties treated by the L.A. | 17 | 213 | 4 | 234 | 10 |
| VI. Total Treatments carried out including re-treatments | 28 | 251 | 4 | 283 | 10 |
| VII. Number of Notices served under Section 4 of the Act. | | | | | |
| (a) Treatment ... | — | — | — | — | — |
| (b) Structural Work (i.e. Proofing) | — | — | — | — | — |
| VIII. Number of cases in which default action was taken following the issue of a Notice under Section 4 of the Act ... | — | — | — | — | — |
| IX. Legal Proceedings ... | — | — | — | — | — |
| X. Number of "Block Con- trol" schemes carried out | — | 15 | — | — | — |

Bakehouses

There are 3 bakehouses in the district.

Milk and Dairies Regulations, 1950

The number of persons registered with the Council as distributors of milk in the area is 9.

Milk (Special Designation) (Pasteurised and Sterilised Milk) Regulation, 1949 to 1953

Eight dealer's licences are in force under the above Regulation, plus seven dealer's supplementary licences.

Milk (Special Designation) (Raw Milk) Regulation, 1949 to 1954

Nine dealer's licences are in force under the above Regulation, plus six dealer's supplementary licences.

Ice Cream

The number of retailers of this product in the area is 52. They sell pre-packed ice cream, which is stored in properly constructed refrigerators.

Meat Inspection**Carcases and Offal inspected and condemned in whole or in part**

| | Cattle excluding Cows. | Cows. | Calves. | Sheep and Lambs. | Pigs. | Horses |
|---|------------------------------|-------|---------|------------------------|--------|--------|
| Number killed (if known) | 1,565 | 435 | 18,115 | 44,342 | 36,014 | 0 |
| Number inspected ... | 1,565 | 435 | 18,023 | 43,736 | 35,887 | 0 |
| All diseases except Tuberculosis and Cysticerci | | | | | | |
| Whole carcasses condemned ... | 2 | 2 | 11 | 40 | 45 | 0 |
| Carcases of which some part or organ was con- demned ... | 23 | 14 | 29 | 586 | 1,231 | 0 |
| Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than tuberculosis and cysti- cerci ... | 1.59 | 3.67 | 0.22 | 1.43 | 3.55 | 0 |
| Tuberculosis only. | | | | | | |
| Whole carcasses condemned ... | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 15 | 0 |
| Carcases of which some part or organ was con- demned ... | 18 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 700 | 0 |
| Percentage of the number inspected affected with tuberculosis ... | 1.15 | 0.92 | 0 | 0 | 1.99 | 0 |
| Cysticercosis | | | | | | |
| Carcases of which some part or organ was con- demned ... | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Carcases submitted to treatment by refrigera- tion ... | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Generalised and totally condemned ... | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Refuse Collection and Disposal

During the year under review the frequency of collection has been increased and all parishes now have a fortnightly collection with the exception of Bishops Hull and Bishops Lydeard where collection is weekly. Refuse is disposed of at the Council's Depot, West Monkton by means of controlled tipping and all refuse is sprayed with a liquid or powder insecticide before being covered with earth. Two tipmen are employed on this work and a diesel tractor, equipped with a power operated loader and detachable dozer blade, is used for the levelling and covering of the refuse. The tractor is also provided with a 3/4 ton trailer for the collection of and delivery to the tip of suitable covering material.

Frequency of Collections in the Area

| <i>Area of Collection.</i> | | | | | <i>Collection Day.</i> | | <i>Frequency.</i> |
|----------------------------|---|-----|-----|-----|------------------------|-----|-------------------|
| 1 | North Curry, Stoke St. Gregory | ... | | | Tuesday | ... | Fortnightly. |
| 2 | Trull, Pitminster | ... | ... | ... | Tuesday | ... | Fortnightly. |
| 3 | Ash Priors, Combe Florey, Halse | ... | | | Friday | ... | Fortnightly. |
| 4 | Sherford Camp | ... | ... | ... | Saturday | ... | Fortnightly. |
| 5 | Ruishton, Stoke St. Mary (excluding Mountfields Avenue), West Hatch | | | | | | |
| | Hatch Beauchamp, Thornfalcon | ... | | | Thursday | ... | Fortnightly. |
| 6 | Mountfields Avenue | ... | ... | ... | Thursday | ... | Weekly |
| 7 | Cheddon Fitzpaine, Kingston St. Mary, Cothelstone, West Bagborough | | | | Thursday | ... | Fortnightly. |
| 8 | West Monkton, Creech St. Michael, Durston | ... | ... | ... | Wednesday | ... | Fortnightly. |
| 9 | Bickenhall, Churchstanton, Corfe, Curland, Orchard Portman, Otterford, Staple Fitzpaine | ... | ... | ... | Wednesday | ... | Fortnightly |
| 10 | Norton Fitzwarren | ... | ... | ... | Monday | ... | Fortnightly. |
| 11 | Staplegrove | ... | ... | ... | Monday | ... | Fortnightly. |
| 12 | Bishops Lydeard | ... | ... | ... | Friday | ... | Weekly. |
| 13 | Bishops Hull | ... | ... | ... | Monday | ... | Weekly. |
| 14 | Lydeard St. Lawrence, Tolland | ... | | | Friday | ... | Fortnightly. |

Salvage Collection and Sales

The following items of salvage were disposed of during the year :

| Material. | | | | T. | C. | Q. | lbs. | £ | s. | d. |
|--------------------|-----|-----|-----|----|----|-----|------|-----|----|----|
| Newsprint | ... | ... | ... | 53 | 9 | 0 | 26 | 188 | 16 | 7 |
| Cardboard | ... | ... | ... | 11 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 56 | 8 | 3 |
| Rags | ... | ... | ... | 3 | 15 | 3 | 3 | 43 | 17 | 6 |
| Wool | ... | ... | ... | | 5 | 3 | 13 | 19 | 12 | 5 |
| Mixed iron | ... | ... | ... | 12 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 71 | 8 | 9 |
| Bottles | ... | ... | ... | | | 164 | doz. | 12 | 2 | 10 |
| Non-ferrous Metals | ... | ... | ... | 1 | 3 | 2 | 7 | 58 | 18 | 2 |
| Battery Lead | ... | ... | ... | | 4 | 2 | 7 | 9 | 7 | 9 |
| Bed Irons | ... | ... | ... | | | 40 | only | 1 | 10 | 0 |
| Bicycle frames | ... | ... | ... | | | 4 | only | | 10 | 0 |
| | | | | 92 | 3 | 3 | 25 | 462 | 12 | 3 |

Food Poisoning Outbreaks

There were four cases of Food Poisoning notified. In one of these, no causative organism was discovered and the diagnosis was doubtful. The other three were infectious by *Salmonella typhimurium*—two young children in one family and a third case in an adult who had no discoverable contact with the others. No further cases occurred, and the source of the two foci of infection remained undertermined.

Factories Act, 1937

The inspection of factories and workshops in the district from a public health point of view is carried out by the staff of the Public Health Department. Routine visits are paid to the various premises and the following table gives particulars of this work. It is to be noted that the term Factories as used in this connection now includes Workshops, which accounts for the large number on the Register in this Rural District.

Inspections for purposes of provisions as to health (including inspections made by Public Health Inspectors) :—

| Premises. | Number on Register. | Number of | | |
|---|---------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| | | Inspec- tions. | Written notices. | Occupiers prose- cuted. |
| (i) Factories in which Section 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be en- forced by Local Authorities | 9 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| (ii) Factories not included in (i) to which Section 7 applies | 63 | 40 | 0 | 0 |
| (iii) Other Premises under the Act (excluding out-workers' premises) | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total ... | 73 | 43 | 0 | 0 |

National Assistance Act, 1948.

Section 50—Burial of the Dead

Two notifications were received during the year that a person in the area had died and that no suitable arrangements for the disposal of the body had been made. The burial was accordingly arranged by the Council.

